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# **MUSIC IN AMERICA**

by

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## MUSIC IN AMERICA

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**A**CCOLADES won abroad by America's musical "ambassadors of good will" give abundant evidence of the growing stature of American music in the eyes of the world. Not many years ago Americans were looked upon in foreign countries as an unmusical people. Their unique contribution of jazz in the field of popular music was recognized, but on the whole the people of the United States were believed to lack discrimination, creativity, or any wish to foster serious music.

Today American performers and the works of American composers are heard and acclaimed on every continent, due largely to government sponsorship of cultural exchange programs in which music has been given an important place. At home musical activity abounds, not only in metropolitan areas with large populations of recent European origin, but also in smaller places where the professional concert series, the local symphony orchestra and choral group, and numerous student and amateur ensembles have become parts of community life. The American concert stage is no longer dominated by imported stars; gifted young Americans can receive the best of musical training in their own country and their native origin is no barrier to public acceptance.

At the same time, the fact that the United States has not yet developed a system of remuneration that enables musical artists and composers to pursue their careers on a basis of equality with talented men and women in other fields has troubled many observers. Despite the widespread popular support for serious music, the great majority of American musicians can scarcely earn a living by music alone.

### POPULARITY OF ORCHESTRAS AND CONCERT ARTISTS

Support for musical activities has grown at a spectacular rate over the past few decades. Howard Hanson, veteran musical educator and composer, recently told a congres-

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sional committee that "almost a miracle" has taken place in American musical life.

We have a participation in music which I believe does not exist anywhere else in the world. We have a development in the public schools which cannot be duplicated in the most musical countries of Europe. . . . Through electronics developments we have probably become the greatest nation of listeners to music that exists.<sup>1</sup>

*Variety*, in a special anniversary issue early in 1956, noted that one of the significant developments of its 50-year life span had been the "emergence of classical music in America as a commercial and popular mass entertainment medium."<sup>2</sup>

The country now has over 1,000 symphony orchestras, compared with fewer than 100 in 1920. Some 34 of these are major professional organizations with budgets of more than \$100,000. In addition, there are more than 600 community orchestras, nearly 250 college orchestras, 35 symphonettes, and 35 youth orchestras. The number of school bands and orchestras has been estimated at 200,000.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately 2,500 cities and towns book professional artists in special concert series, compared with only 1,000 in 1940, while more than 80 festivals of music are held in the summer months. Attendance at the annual Tanglewood Festival, Lenox, Mass., has grown from 15,000 to more than 136,000 since its first season in 1936.

#### MUSIC BROADCASTS; RISE IN RECORD AND HI-FI SALES

Radio and high fidelity developments have created the largest audience for serious music in the history of any country. Broadcast Music, Inc., reports that 8,297 hours of concert music were programmed by 1,270 radio stations during 1955, an average of 6.5 hours a week. Facilities of some stations are devoted almost solely to "good music" programs. Saturday afternoon broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera Company command an audience of 15 million. It is estimated that more people hear the New York Philharmonic over the air on a single Sunday afternoon than could be seated in Carnegie Hall, where the concert originates, in more than a century of Sundays.

<sup>1</sup> Testimony, subcommittee of House Committee on Education and Labor, Jan. 20, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Bronson, "Longhair Outgrosses Baseball," *Variety*, January 1956, p. 467.

<sup>3</sup> John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music* (1954), p. 689. The *Directory of the World of Music 1956* lists symphony orchestras in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 400 music groups present full-length opera to the public, usually in English. Many contemporary American operas are given their first hearings by the numerous so-called "opera workshops."

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The boom in serious musical recordings is phenomenal. In the decade since the hi-fi phonograph and long-playing records first came into wide use, record sales have jumped a thousandfold. No fewer than 219 million records were sold in the United States in 1955, and about two-fifths of the total were recordings of serious concert music. So rapid is the flow of new records to the market that the author of a guide for record-buyers recently observed that in the chamber music and solo recital field alone more records came out in a recent twelvemonth "than there were hours in the year to listen to them."<sup>4</sup>

The surprising fact that Americans now are spending more on music than on spectator sports was first noted by *Variety*. While 35 million persons bought concert tickets in 1955, only 15 million paid admissions to baseball games. The "potential box office" for concerts and baseball was estimated at \$50 million and \$40 million, respectively. *Variety* reported that during 1954 people in the United States laid out more than \$70 million for recordings of serious music, more than \$140 million for high fidelity phonograph and tape equipment, \$25 million for printed concert music, and \$350 million for musical instruments. It estimated that year's expenditures on all spectator sports at \$220 million.

#### EMPHASIS ON MUSIC IN U.S. SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

American children now hear much great music in their early years. Most elementary schools are equipped with phonographs and recordings for use in teaching musical appreciation. The "rhythm band" is a nursery school staple. Many fourth and fifth graders are recruited into embryo orchestras, where they receive their first instruction in playing musical instruments. School music programs frequently lead to private lessons for the more gifted youngsters.

A historian of music notes that it is no longer regarded as "a frill on the educational petticoat" and that "No matter what economy waves may surge over the educational system in the near future, music education is now so firmly incorporated into the curriculum that it is unlikely to suffer more severely than any other field outside the three Rs."<sup>5</sup> *Musical Courier*, commenting on the golden

<sup>4</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, *The Guide to Long-Playing Records, Chamber and Solo Instruments* (1955), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Cecil Smith, *Worlds of Music* (1952), p. 297.

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anniversary meeting in St. Louis last April of the Music Educators' National Conference, urged managers, composers, and artists to keep an eye on the schools because they were building up "an appetite for music which can well make [the United States] the most musical land the world has ever seen."<sup>6</sup>

Music has long been considered an essential part of elementary education, but the scope of school music has broadened considerably in recent years.

Projects ranging from rhythm bands to class piano study, from singing simple folk songs to singing Elizabethan madrigals and large choral works, from rudimentary training in sight-reading to harmony and counterpoint are sponsored and financed by school boards that were hardly willing half a century ago to hire a single specialized music teacher to make the rounds of several schools.<sup>7</sup>

An estimated 40,000 full-time or part-time music teachers give classroom and extra-curricular instruction in tax-supported elementary and secondary schools.

The trend in school music is away from merely arranging special extra-curricular activity for unusually gifted boys and girls and toward provision of music courses for all pupils. The principle accepted by most educators is that all children are inherently musical and that an understanding of music is essential to a well-rounded education.<sup>8</sup>

At the college level, music is rapidly becoming a standard part of the basic curriculum. Many institutions offer a broad spectrum of music courses. In the 1951-52 school year 648 institutions of higher learning, chiefly liberal arts colleges, conferred degrees in music.<sup>9</sup> The music directory lists nearly 250 special schools of music in 43 states.

#### **SPREAD OF MUSICAL ACTIVITY IN SMALL COMMUNITIES**

One of the significant aspects of America's musical development is the growth of indigenous musical activity in small communities. While the professional concert, booked from New York, may be a small town's leading musical event, the root of the community's musical life is its own participation in music-making.

<sup>6</sup> "The National Scene," *Musical Courier*, June 1956, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Cecil Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-297.

<sup>8</sup> The New York City school system makes unique provision for gifted children in two high schools, established 20 years ago during the administration of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. At these schools children receive basic high school courses in addition to intensive music education. Participants are selected by competition.

<sup>9</sup> Robert A. Choate, "Music in Higher Education," *Higher Education*, December 1955.

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Local amateur or quasi-professional music groups are far more adventurous than the sponsors of big-name attractions. Frequently the local group's choice of music for its concerts reflects a more sophisticated taste than the programs of visiting artists. Many contemporary works, particularly in the field of chamber opera, receive their first hearings in communities with relatively few ties to the metropolis. One-third of the country's community orchestras are in cities of less than 50,000 population.

The schools are a major catalyst for local musical organizations. They provide the manpower for the local ensembles and build up music libraries which become available to the performing groups. In Driggs, Idaho, for example, a school music director made a point of training choral leaders and accompanists to provide the community with these needed specialists for an active musical life.<sup>10</sup>

Colleges and universities frequently form a nucleus for community musical endeavors. The extension services of several institutions—University of Wisconsin, Michigan State College, Iowa State Teachers College among them—supply music instruction in various fields to lower school pupils and to adults over wide areas in their states. Typical of programs presented by educational institutions last spring were the festivals of contemporary music sponsored by Louisiana State University and the University of Louisville; a Bach festival sponsored by Whittier (Cal.) College; and the intercollegiate choral festival at Burlington, Vt.

Growth of music-making for the sheer love of it is evidenced by the establishment in 1948 of the Amateur Chamber Music Players, which circulates lists of players in all parts of the country who enjoy getting together for musical evenings in private homes. Some 3,500 names have been entered on this roster. According to a recent summary of music statistics, some 19 million Americans play the piano; 4 million the guitar; 3 million the violin or other stringed instruments; more than 2 million the woodwinds.<sup>11</sup>

#### BROADENED OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN COMPOSERS

Broadened musical activity by professionals and amateurs has brought benefits to composers. For years Ameri-

<sup>10</sup> "The State of Musical Education," *Music Educators' Journal*, June-July 1956, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Broadcast Music, Inc., *Concert Music U.S.A.* 1956.

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can composers were largely ignored in the concert hall, and audiences accepted the inference that native music was inferior. As public taste improved, a demand grew for more contemporary music, including compositions written by Americans.

While masterpieces of the past continue to dominate the symphonic repertoire, virtually every major orchestra now presents new American music each season and several orchestras regularly commission new works. A recent survey showed that almost 15 per cent of the compositions played by 30 major symphony orchestras in the 1955-56 season were written by Americans or by foreigners long associated with American musical life. The National Symphony at Washington, D. C., which presented 15 American compositions last season, ranked first; in all, the 30 orchestras offered 129 American works.<sup>12</sup>

Maturing of public taste has resulted in elevation of the quality of music demanded for popular entertainment. Top-flight composers now turn out music scores for Hollywood movies, the Broadway theater, ballet companies, and television shows. The composers have thrown off attachment to outworn European conventions and are seeking more original expression in their works.

The result is a narrowing of the gulf between popular and so-called "long-hair" music and an overlapping of the audiences for both. The popularity of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* is an obvious case in point. Leonard Bernstein, still under 40, has composed both popular and serious music and sometimes has mingled the two. Out of this development has come real appreciation for the original and creative aspects of jazz, and a lively debate in musical circles on whether jazz can be classed as a genuine art form.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *National Music Council Bulletin*, September 1956, p. 4. A recent listing of serious American composers, admittedly incomplete, carried 840 names.

<sup>13</sup> Indicative of the serious attention given to jazz is the panel discussion at the Jazz Festival, Newport, R. I., last July and recent establishment of the Institute of Jazz Studies, which sponsors research and training of teachers in the jazz field. The Music Educators' National Conference, for the first time in its 50-year history, sponsored a discussion program last April at which four spokesmen (a musician, a record company official, a night club proprietor who lectures on jazz at Boston University, and a Catholic teacher-priest) presented the case for jazz.

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## **Role of Federal Government in Music**

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THE UNITED STATES, unlike many other western countries, has no official bureau of the arts to provide financial backing for major musical activities. Until comparatively recent years the central government showed little interest in the musical arts; use of federal tax funds for music was confined almost solely to maintenance of military service bands.

The federal government's first significant entry into the musical life of the nation was by the indirect route of a program of economic rehabilitation during the depression of the 1930s. The Works Progress Administration, set up primarily to create jobs for the unemployed, had separate work-making units for virtually every category of workers in the country, including musicians.

Under the W.P.A.'s Federal Music Project jobless musicians were given work in bands, orchestras, chamber music ensembles, choral and operatic units. Music teachers were paid to instruct pupils who could not afford lessons. Programs, many of them in experimental music or opera, were offered to the public at prices within reach of the depression pocketbook. Copyists were put to work transcribing scores for public libraries and for use of new musical organizations. Works by living American composers were given hearings all over the nation.

The project thus served to keep alive the musical impulse in the people, to sustain the competence of the nation's musical manpower and greatly to expand the audience for good music. Its assistance came at an appropriate time because American composers were just beginning to turn away from European idols and seek inspiration from native sources. Many W.P.A. musicians and composers later contributed significantly to the musical treasures of the nation.

During World War II the government gave official recognition to the value of music as a factor in military and civilian morale. An Expert Consultant on Music served on the staff of the Secretary of War, and the Joint Army and Navy Committee for Welfare and Recreation estab-

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lished a subcommittee on music to advise on programs at military bases. The armed forces frequently called on civilian musical organizations to supply equipment and to assist in promoting musical activities among service personnel. Musical artists, both in and out of uniform, toured military camps to give concerts and many musical programs were presented in war plants.

#### **USE OF MUSIC IN PROMOTING FOREIGN POLICY AIMS**

In the postwar years the federal government has evinced considerable interest in using American music to win friendship and respect for the United States in other countries. Activities of this sort are carried on chiefly through the U.S. Information Agency, including the Voice of America, the International Educational Exchange program of the State Department, and the Cultural Presentations program which sponsors overseas tours of American musical artists.

The Information Agency employs music in various ways consistent with its official aim of presenting "those important aspects of the life and culture of the people of the United States which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the government of the United States." The chief of the agency's musical branch has explained: "We seek to dispel the impression, held too firmly by many of our friends and vigorously propagated by our enemies, that we are a materialistic nation, unconcerned with spiritual or cultural values."<sup>14</sup>

The agency's Broadcasting Service (Voice of America) presents a variety of musical programs through its own outlets and through foreign radio stations. Some of the programs are specially prepared by the service; others are re-broadcasts of major symphony concerts and operatic productions given in the United States. The 170 U.S. information centers in other countries are essentially circulating libraries of Americana, whose shelves include musical scores, sheet music, parts for ensemble players, and recordings of American works.

Periodically the music section in Washington sends to the various centers packets of printed music and recordings containing the best of recent releases. It also answers hun-

<sup>14</sup> David S. Cooper, "American Music—the Government's Cultural Ambassador," *Music Educators Journal*, September-October 1954, p. 29.

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dreds of requests for services and materials. In some centers the records are used so frequently by patrons of the libraries that the entire supply must be replaced before a year is out. Foreign conductors, musicians, and music-lovers frequently borrow printed music for study or performance, with the result that an increasing number of American compositions are being heard in concerts abroad by non-American musicians.

The information centers serve also as liaison points for American musical artists traveling in foreign countries. In some centers live concerts are sponsored under contract with local musical groups which give programs featuring the music of their own country and of the United States. "The result is that Piston, Barber, Schuman, Hanson and Sessions are appearing on concert programs of foreign nations just as Ravel, Honegger, Walton, Orff and Dallapiccola appear regularly on ours."<sup>15</sup>

The State Department's Exchange of Persons program has helped to further both the development of American music and appreciation for it abroad. Under the exchange program nearly 700 American musicians and musicologists have studied, taught, or carried on research overseas during the past six years, and about 100 foreign musical specialists have been brought to this country.

#### **SPONSORSHIP OF AMERICAN MUSICAL TOURS ABROAD**

The enormous potential value of presenting America's achievements in the fine arts to the rest of the world was officially recognized for the first time when the State Department's Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange reported to Congress on its activities during the latter half of 1951. The commission observed that the mounting propaganda offensive of the Soviet Union in the cultural field had a "potentially adverse effect on United States interests abroad" because of the absence of cultural presentations by Americans.

The Soviet's emphasis on the fine arts capitalizes on the fact that certain areas of the world, particularly Europe and Latin America, have always underestimated the level of American cultural achievements. This prejudice has affected attitudes and judgments about American policies and foreign relations. . . . Because cultural achievements are so important to the peoples of these areas, they

<sup>15</sup> David S. Cooper, "American Music Abroad," *Musical Courier*, June 1956, p. 10.

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may be influenced in favor of Communism as a result of Russia's newly acquired prestige in the artistic fields. . . . The Soviet drive in the fine arts finds the United States at present without a counter-offensive.

The commission recommended appointment of a committee of private experts in artistic fields to counsel the State Department and to enlist private financial backing for the presentation abroad of American artists. Accepting the recommendations, the State Department in 1952 initiated limited sponsorship of musical tours to foreign countries. Among the first musical organizations sent abroad that year were the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York City Ballet Company. The *Porgy and Bess* company, which had just completed an outstandingly successful tour of Western Europe, was sent to Yugoslavia and to Mediterranean countries not included in its commercial itinerary.<sup>16</sup> The American musical groups were enthusiastically received by foreign artists and extravagantly praised by the foreign press.

Congress in 1954 granted a request by President Eisenhower for a \$5 million emergency fund "to meet extraordinary or unusual expenses arising in the international affairs of the government." The sum was made available over a two-year period to provide financial assistance for performances of outstanding American concert artists and sports groups before foreign audiences. The money was to be used to offset losses incurred by the traveling groups. The State Department contracted with the American National Theater and Academy, a private organization chartered by Congress, to help it select suitable artists and administer the fund.

When the fund approached exhaustion early this year, Congress gave the program permanent status. The International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956 authorized the President to provide for tours in foreign countries by creative and performing artists and for American representation in cultural festivals and competitions abroad. It created an Advisory Commission on the Arts to be composed of experienced persons in the various cultural fields to assist in selecting artists for the tours and to give counsel on international cultural projects

<sup>16</sup> The much-publicized *Porgy and Bess* tour of the U.S.S.R. in 1955 was arranged, without U.S. government sponsorship, through private negotiations with the Soviet Ministry of Culture.

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in which the government may be engaged. The measure required that major financial underwriting for the tours continue to be obtained from private sources.

The United States still lags far behind the U.S.S.R. in the scope of its foreign cultural activities. The director of the U.S. Information Agency reported to a congressional committee early this year that 37 cultural and seven sports delegations had been sent abroad since the start of the emergency fund program; in the same two-year period the U.S.S.R. had arranged tours of 148 such Soviet delegations.<sup>17</sup> At least eight musical artists or groups are to be sent overseas during the 1956-57 season, among them Marian Anderson, contralto, to Berlin and Oslo; the Cleveland symphony orchestra to Europe; the Benny Goodman orchestra to the Far East; Rudolf Serkin, pianist, to India; and the Westminster Choir to the Near and Far East.

#### VALUE OF THE PRESENTATIONS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

There is universal agreement that American musical presentations not only have scored artistic triumphs abroad but also have recorded other important gains. Praising the "remarkably successful" cultural programs, Gen. Alfred M. Gruenthaler, then N.A.T.O. chief, said last year that "If we could put on 20 *Porgy and Bess* shows, it would go a long way to show that we do not come from a country that is as materialistic as some Europeans suggest." In Tokyo, where thousands of Japanese waited in line all night to obtain admission to a Symphony of the Air concert, a Japanese cabinet minister told a reporter: "If America were to withdraw all her security forces from Japan, I am sure we would defend your orchestra to the last man."

A recent dispatch from the American embassy in Lisbon said that visits of groups like the Robert Shaw Chorale or the Philadelphia orchestra had "both immediate and continuing impact, all favorable," and that it was "priceless to have our place in civilization so simply and undeniably asserted." When a Dutch audience gave the Philadelphia orchestra a 10-minute standing ovation, the U.S. embassy at The Hague said: "Visits of this nature do more to counteract the prevalent European feeling that 'the United States has no culture' than any number of lectures or handouts on the subject."

<sup>17</sup> Theodore C. Streibert, testimony, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Feb. 21, 1956.

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#### FEDERAL CHARTERING OF THE NATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL.

The position attained by music in the eyes of the government at Washington was signified by the President's signature on Aug. 1 of a bill granting a congressional charter to the National Music Council. The council, representing 44 separate clubs or agencies with a combined membership of 800,000, is the largest federation of music groups in the country. It represents the musical community on the U.S. Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In a statement issued when he approved the chartering bill, President Eisenhower said that "The development of music is . . . the development of a national treasure," because music contains "moral and spiritual values" and "reaches easily and quickly across lingual, racial or national barriers." The council hailed the act and the President's statement as "a milestone in the history of American music"; it represented the first time that "our government has given full official recognition to the importance of music in our national life and culture."

Rep. Frank Thompson, Jr. (D-N.J.), author of the bill, said he pressed for a congressional charter because he was "thoroughly convinced that there was . . . substantial evidence of the need for recognition of the importance of music in the nation." Howard Hanson, president of the council, said he expected the charter to be "of significant value to the development of American music."

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#### American Music's Financial Problems

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DEVELOPMENT among millions of Americans of a liking for and appreciation of good music has encouraged formation of hundreds of symphony orchestras and other musical organizations; increased demand for the services of musicians in such groups and for appearances by touring artists; and enlarged the market for musical instruments, phonographs, and musical recordings. The rise of interest in serious music, however, has not brought a comparable upsurge of prosperity to the musical world as a whole.

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Substantial financial rewards from what might be called the boom in music have been limited largely to manufacturers of and dealers in musical equipment, to commercial promoters of musical events, and to the relatively few top performers who are in position to command munificent fees or salaries. Rank-and-file musicians, like average practitioners of other fine arts, still find it difficult to make an adequate living from their profession. Symphony orchestras and opera companies still cannot meet expenses from the proceeds of ticket sales and must seek support elsewhere to make up annual deficits.<sup>18</sup>

#### INSUFFICIENCY OF EARNINGS OF AVERAGE MUSICIANS

Perhaps as many as 400 musicians, not all of them Americans, manage to get along satisfactorily on returns from recitals or appearances as soloists with symphony orchestras or other musical organizations in the United States. The American Federation of Musicians, larger of the two musicians' unions, found in recent surveys that the great majority of its 252,000 members could not afford to practice their profession; only 53,000 depended solely on music for a living; 30,000 were part-time musicians; the remainder either had music-related jobs, such as copying, or engaged in music as a side line or avocation. Band leader Guy Lombardo told a House Ways and Means subcommittee, Nov. 30, that prospects for earning a living at music were now so poor that "Parents, especially if they are musicians themselves, are not encouraging youngsters to take up music."

A.F.M. President Petrillo has said that "The classical musician is the hardest hit of all." *International Musician*, the union's magazine, said last winter that "The minor league symphony musician has been the sharecropper of the musical profession in the United States, . . . respected artist during the orchestra season for a few weeks of the year, . . . the forgotten man" the remainder of the year.<sup>19</sup>

#### INABILITY OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS TO PAY OWN WAY

A job with a symphony orchestra is a precarious thing. Even the top-ranking orchestras require the support of annual fund-raising drives. The working season of or-

<sup>18</sup> The New York City Opera Company recently announced abandonment of its 1957 spring season at the City Center of Music and Drama; the \$80,000 deficit anticipated for the group's 1956 autumn session had turned out to be more than twice that amount.

<sup>19</sup> "For Symphony Orchestras' Survival," *International Musician*, February 1956, p. 14.

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chestra members, moreover, frequently extends over fewer than 30 weeks. The 3,000 players in the country's major symphony orchestras average around \$90 a week when working, but the average annual income from symphony jobs is less than \$3,000. Members of the Buffalo, Kansas City, and Pittsburgh orchestras average between \$2,600 and \$2,850 a year; Baltimore and Dallas symphony players receive \$1,500 to \$1,600.

The 32 leading orchestras together spend around \$15 million a year; the "Big Three" (Boston, New York Philharmonic, and Philadelphia) operate on annual budgets of approximately \$1.5 million. But the New York Philharmonic estimates that it loses about \$3,500 on a single concert in Carnegie Hall, despite box-office receipts of \$5,000.

The patronage of a few wealthy individuals, which once formed the core of musical support in the United States, has greatly diminished; the orchestras now must appeal to the community at large for a multitude of small donations. Local business establishments frequently make sizable contributions, or underwrite a particular series of concerts, as a gesture of civic fealty. The Eastman Kodak Company not only contributes liberally to the Rochester, N. Y., symphony but also engages it to give a series of noon concerts for employees. In Washington, D. C., local merchants have met the costs of children's concerts. The principal orchestras may earn extra funds from the sale of recordings, but proceeds from sponsors of broadcast concerts have fallen off since the advent of television; TV occasionally presents operas but has shown little interest in symphonic music.

A few orchestras receive support from tax funds. Since 1943, North Carolina has paid biennial subventions to its state symphony, which gives a concert on the floor of the legislature each session. The amount appropriated has risen over the years from \$4,000 to \$20,000. The Detroit Symphony gets \$25,000 from the municipal parks and recreation department to meet costs of summer concerts.

#### OBSTACLES CONFRONTING ASPIRING CONCERT ARTISTS

A gifted musician who aspires to a career as a concert soloist has an even more difficult time than the artist who will settle for an anonymous place in a large ensemble. The concert field is overcrowded; music schools annually

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turn out hundreds of men and women capable of performing the great works of music with facility, even virtuosity. An abundance of musical talent, combined with tight control over the concert market by a handful of artists' managers, makes attainment of a successful concert career something approaching a miracle.

It is virtually impossible to embark on a concert career without the cooperation of an experienced manager. The managerial field itself is dominated by a few large corporations; the largest is Columbia Artists' Management, Inc., which currently lists 150 concert stars, a string quartet, five dance groups, and 30 special-event troupes (including imports). A manager contracts with a musician to obtain bookings and receives commissions amounting usually to 15 or 20 per cent of the musician's fees. "They [the managers] can make and break careers; they determine who is to appear where, and in considerable measure who is not to appear; and they establish the size of the fees the artists may expect to receive."<sup>20</sup>

The most a young musical aspirant can hope for is to be taken up as one of the lesser lights in a concert series. Before he can expect this good fortune, however, he must establish himself with the New York critics by giving a debut recital at his own expense, an event likely to cost more than \$1,000. If the player or singer gets good notices and displays some striking characteristic in performance or personality—and if there is an opening for a bottom-fee artist to fill out a concert package—he may be accepted by a top manager.

When the young artist wins a place in a concert series, his fees will run from \$250 to \$500 a concert, out of which he must pay his manager and his travel expenses. He may hold his place in the concert series for three years; unless he makes an extraordinary hit, which would enable him to rise to the next fee bracket, he must usually make way at the end of three years for the next young hopeful.

#### **EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL LOT OF MUSICIANS**

Many efforts have been made to siphon off more of the money spent on music to the composers and artists who make the music. The American Federation of Musicians

<sup>20</sup> Cecil Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

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has long fought the effects of the machine on musicians' income by demanding royalty payments for each public performance of recorded music. The Music Performers Trust Fund, established by the musicians' union, nets more than \$1 million a year, which is distributed among A.F.M. locals to finance free public concerts.<sup>21</sup> The union is currently lobbying for repeal of the 20 per cent cabaret tax. An A.F.M. witness asserted before the House Ways and Means subcommittee, Nov. 30, that musicians had lost 25,000 man-years of work since 1943 in establishments subject to that levy.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), organized in 1914, has succeeded in compelling payment of royalties to composers for each public performance of their music. The American Guild of Musical Artists, a union for concert performers, has established a basic agreement with managers to protect the interests of soloists and recitalists.

Numerous music clubs and certain philanthropic foundations offer prizes and fellowships to encourage gifted performers and composers. John D. Rockefeller, 3d, proposed on Nov. 20 that \$10 million be raised to promote development of "the new and the experimental" in music, ballet, and drama, some of the money to be used to underwrite concerts by young performers.

It is suggested periodically that the United States take a leaf from the practice of foreign governments and subsidize national opera companies or place outstanding composers on the government payroll. Rep. Thompson has introduced bills in Congress to create a fine arts agency in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and to authorize allotment of \$100,000 to each state for creation of cultural facilities.

Federal subsidization of the arts, however, has little appeal for most Americans, including musicians. Nine-tenths of orchestras surveyed in 1953 by the American Symphony Orchestra League went on record in opposition to cash subsidization of their activities by the central government. Nearly half of the individual board members of the orchestras, which included both high and low-budget organ-

<sup>21</sup> Because of a Taft-Hartley ban on union administration of such royalty funds, the Music Performers Trust Fund is now handled by the recording industry.

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izations, testified in favor of municipal subsidies, but only 14 per cent approved federal subsidies.

President Eisenhower praised the National Music Council last August as "truly representative of the American way of life in which music can flourish as it should in a free democratic society, as a voluntary activity under the nourishment and control of private citizens." Jacques Barzun has suggested that the future of music is in the "do-it-yourself" movement. "Democratic incomes cannot support princely undertakings—except through state action—which we still distrust." Present trends, he said, might "lead to a solution of the old unhappy triangle of art, business, and government by restoring the amateur-consumer to a position of strength."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Jacques Barzun, "Music: for Money or for Love?" *Harper's Magazine*, May 1956, p. 46.



